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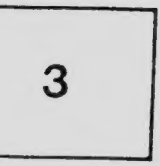

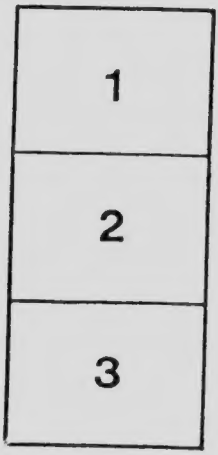

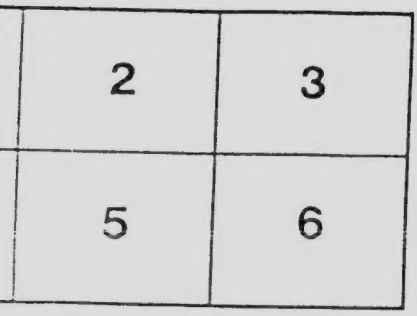

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Canadian Postal Cancellations

BY H. S. SEAMAN, WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

What, up again, after being banished to the deep recesses of oblivion (by the Editor of a well-known and highly respected Stamp Magazine published in Canada) by the phrase "no serious collector pays much attention to cancellations—precancels—dobs—double strikes or overprints." Yes, Cancellations are up again—that is, they are not quiet "dead and buried" so to speak.

But, all the same, the wonder is that they are up again, for all the help they get from the many "serious collectors" who are quietly, one could almost say stealthily gathering them in, storing them away and preparing, as many another phase of stamp collecting has been handled for the "psychological moment." We believe the psychological moment is upon us, we believe that Canadian Postal Cancellations are beginning to reflect in the demand as well as in the prices asked (for of course one of these is the cause and the other the effect), the emergence of a well rounded, permanent place and demand for clear, clean, and distinct postal authentication that the service paid for has been delivered by the postal department of our authorized government.

And why in all reasonableness should not Canadian Postal Cancellations receive serious consideration? Edition after edition of British "Cancellation" Catalogues are exhausted, so that you can hardly buy one today—from publisher, collector or second-hand dealer—they are not only out of print but off the market, while Stanley Gibbons' general catalogue gives some information on this line, it is only enough to whet the appetite of the real collector.

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The United States specialists' priced catalogue, of which, I believe only two editions have appeared, gives a place to and sets prices for the cancellations on the stamps of that country that makes the prices of the ordinary "collection specimen,"—be it ever so fine—look pale at the mouth.

To cite a few instances—here is a stamp priced at 3 cents as a normal collection specimen with ordinary black obliteration without any particular significance attached to it. This stamp with the same ordinary insignificant cancellation, or the town postmark in blue is priced here at three times the price of the black, viz. 10 cents. Other postal markings make this ordinary 3 cent stamp worth 50 cents if cancelled in purple or magenta, 75 cents if the word "paid," happened to land upon it from the postal clerk's gavel or hammer. If this same stamp had been fortunate enough to have been hit after the cancelling weapon had come in contact with a pad of red or brown ink, its price by this catalogue is $1. If the letter bearing this particular stamp had been, by any mishap, delayed in posting until the mail was closed at the Post Office for the city to which it was addressed, and the writer had the energy to take time by the forelock and hie himself to the railway station, where after being posted on the train, it was hit by the railway representative of the postal department, the value of that stamp is advanced to the price—note carefully—$2.50. But this is not the limit, if the postman in the town office happened to have a green ink pad with which to regale his cancelling device the price of this same stamp so hit is $3, according to the decision of the compilers of this catalogue—and they are given credit by those who deal with them for knowing values in stamp cancellations. Not to repeat, but to add a few details, a stamp priced in ordinary condition at 6 cents jumps to $9 if mailed on a train, or $12.50 if mailed at sea and cancelled "Packet" or equivalent in any other language.

PAID

LATE FEE

One other instance—here is a stamp priced at 60 cents—kinsman of No. 14 Canada, 1 cent rose, 1859, priced as follows: if cancelled in black 60 cents, blue $1, red $1.50, brown $2, ultamarine $3, green $7.50, Paid $1, Way Letter $2.50, Railway $4, Packet $12.50.

WAY LETTER

If these prices indicate the stage that has been arrived at on the other side of that imaginary line, that we who live close to hear so much about—it appears to this writer that it is good evidence that the Editor has not felt the phila-

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telic pulse correctly, or he would not have said "No serious collector, etc."—in fact we can prove it and we will adduce part of the evidence to close this article.

Let us take a stroll by way of a few pages in a "Canadian Postal Cancellation" collection. Cancellations being here arranged in alphabetical order.

Bull's Eye (Jarret's No. 31) two, three or four ring in various sizes of central ball as well as various thicknesses and sizes of the surrounding rings, at least 20 distinct dies represented in black. Those in color will come in under "Colors."

Canada. The word in full in at least fifteen different sizes of type and supporting framework embellishing it.

C.E., C.W., U.C., L.C., Alta., Assa., Sask., are all here, the latter three when these abbreviations represented "Territories" not "Provinces" and in addition "N.W.T.," which only about four towns ever used. Here is an interesting postmark (not on a stamp) Bytown Oct. 10, 1854, U.C. in Jarrett's No. 21. Jarrett's No. 133 and 151 as well as various similar cancellations include Halifax, Kingston, Montreal, Ottawa, Prescott, Quebec, St. Catherines and Toronto.

Colors are represented by blue, brown, crimson, green, magenta, purple (in brownish, reddish and purple black), red, scarlet and violet. These of course illustrate bull's eyes, targets, crosses, grids, stars, diamonds, triangles and pheons; four, six and eight fan windmills and town, city, railway, railway station and city sub-stations.

Metal Grids in great diversity by way of the number of and width of the lines. Metal crowns, four distinct varieties.

Hand made Cork cancellations with positively no end to the objects that have been attempted by the imaginative postmaster or his perhaps more adventurous clerk. Here are windmills, crosses, stars, wheels, initial letters, Tudor crown (well executed), lily, shamrock leaves, at least eight representatives of natural history from the animal kingdom.

Postmarks of cities, towns, villages (what is the relative scarcity of a "Toronto" postmark 1869 on No. 34 and a postmark at the same date say of Johnstown or Markham?), mail cars, (over 275 railway sub-divisions were in operation in 1903), railway stations, city sub and rural stations, postmen's individual mallets, railway car numbers and direction of train travel.

Year Dates whether in full as 1869, 1882, or only 72, 79 or 97 as the case may be.

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Shades, Papers and Perforations—the former two have their place in all catalogues already, and when Scott's (they will eventually, why not now?) lists perforation 11½x12 there will be ample opportunity for the poor man in Canada to exercise his craving to his entire satisfaction in place of reaching his limit with 150 or so stamps which the ordinary catalogue lists, for at about this number the poor man has to pass up and at the same time limit his number of specimens on account of the price.

Now for the evidence that "no serious collector" was written without due consideration of the exclusive "No" to say the least. This "No" excludes Mr. E. E. Goodchild who has for some years paid a good deal of attention to this feature and is recognized as a serious collector of sound judgment. "No" excludes R. D. E., a serious collector of Toronto, who wrote in rebuttal of this statement that it is "absolutely wrong." "No" excludes Mr. Fred Jarrett, the compiler of "Postage Stamps of Canada," which illustrates (1st Edition) over one hundred and sixty designs of cancellations on Canadian stamps. Mr. Jarrett is President of the Canadian Philatelic Association this year—possibly that would indicate one serious collector at least. The seven cuts embellishing this article are from Mr. Jarrett's catalogue and were kindly loaned by him. And in closing for good full measure one other Montreal collector, one of the most serious of collectors in the whole of Canada, for one single stamp (a stamp that had formerly come from Montreal to Winnipeg) paid the Winnipeg owner one hundred and fifty dollars more for it than the Winnipeg man originally paid the Montreal collector for it. Why? Because of the perfection of the stamp as a collection specimen? No, not at all. Because he did not have a stamp of that kind? No, again. But simply because it is the only known specimen of that particular stamp bearing a certain cancellation listed in Mr. Jarrett's book.

Serious collectors are paying attention and more than that, they are paying good big money for nice clean, clear specimens of Canadian Postal Cancellations.